

Application No. 09/856,904
Attorney's Docket No. 000500-299
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wherein the material laminate has a planar extension and a thickness direction perpendicular to said planar extension,

wherein at least one of the top sheet and the liquid transfer sheet includes thermoplastic material, and the top sheet and the liquid transfer sheet are joined together through the use of laminate bonding locations on the material laminate, within which the thermoplastic material is caused to at least partially soften or melt and thereby join together the top and liquid transfer sheets at a sheet joining region,

wherein the absorbent body includes a partially neutralised superabsorbent;
and

wherein the sheet-joining regions of the material laminate extend in the thickness direction of said material laminate through the top sheet and at least partially through the liquid transfer sheet, such that the liquid transfer sheet is compressed at the laminate bonding locations.

2. (Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the laminate bonding locations are disposed in two or more groups where each group includes at least two said laminate bonding locations, wherein the largest relative distance between two mutually adjacent laminate bonding locations in a given group is smaller than the smallest distance between a group and its nearest neighbouring group, wherein the material laminate includes, between the laminate bonding locations in each said group, first non-bonded laminate regions that have a greater density than second non-bonded laminate regions located between respective said groups.

sub 2 3. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the partially neutralized superabsorbent has a degree of neutralisation such that the pH in the absorbent body of the article when wetted will lie in the range of 3.5-4.9.

4. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 2, wherein the laminate bonding locations include punctiform bonds, linear bonds, rectangular bonds or circular bonds.

B2 5. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the top sheet has through-penetrating holes within the laminate bonding locations.

6. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the top sheet is comprised of a nonwoven material.

7. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the top sheet is comprised of a carded, thermobonded nonwoven material.

8. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the liquid transfer sheet is a fibre wadding sheet having a thickness of 0.5-4 mm.

9. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the smallest distance x between two mutually adjacent groups of laminate bonding locations is

B2 at least twice the size of the greatest distance y between two mutually adjacent laminate bonding locations in respective groups.

B3 sub 10. (Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 9, wherein the ratio of x/y between the distances x and y is from 2/1 to 12/1.

B4 sub 11. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article according to Claim 9, wherein x is 2-6 mm and y is 0.5-1 mm.

B5 D17-- 12. (Newly added) An absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein said absorbent article comprises one of a diaper, sanitary napkin, incontinence protector, and wound dressing. --

-- 13. (Newly added) An absorbent article according to Claim 3, wherein the partially neutralized superabsorbent has a degree of neutralisation such that the pH in the absorbent body of the article when wetted will lie in the range of 4.1-4.7.--